

Hardie's

Fruit & Vegetable Co.

FIELD REPORT QUALITY CONTROL

DATE: April 8, 2002

Warm weather continues in the Desert regions with temperatures in the high 80s to low 90s expected through next week. ***These temperatures will increase heat related problems (seeders, growth crack, fringe burn, sunburn cap, weak tip and tip burn) in these remaining Desert stands.*** In the San Joaquin Valley ideal growing conditions this week look to continue into next week. This will help growth rates in these fields that have been slow mature. Light lettuce volume will continue this week with more shippers expecting to get underway next week.

LETTUCE

With temperatures approaching the low 90s in the Desert regions shippers will shift volume to the San Joaquin Valley fields next week. Desert supplies will quickly dwindle as the warm temperatures increase heat related defects in these remaining desert stands. ***Light supplies from Huron/Bakersfield will continue to increase over the next couple of weeks in the ideal weather pattern. Overall quality will be better from the Huron area with carton weights on the lighter side for the short term.*** Better volume expected around the second week of April as more shippers begin harvests. Overall lettuce supplies are on the rise as transition continues. Lesser demand along with numerous local deals from Arizona to Colorado is helping to ease the pressure on these supplies. **Small supply shortages remain possible as transition continues.**

LEAF LETTUCE

Green, red and butter lettuce volume will pick up in the Huron area this week as desert supplies wind down. Fields in the transition areas look to be in good shape as warmer weather increases growth rates this week. Light fringe burn, overspray and blister are prevalent in these stands with texture improving daily. Romaine stands remain behind schedule with many stands set for heart supplies not maturing up to speed. Light beach and cupping is evident in most fields causing concern for growers. **Romaine and especially romaine heart supplies will remain light, with varying supply gaps possible, as transition continues. Pack-outs will continue to produce lighter carton weights as growers harvest these remaining stands. Overall quality is generally good as the weather continues to cooperate.**

BROCCOLI

Light volume will continue this week from all growing regions as warmer temperatures are set to return. **Supplies look to remain on the light side possibly throughout April depending on Mother Nature.** Overall quality is generally good on these limited supplies. *Medium beads and generally tight crowns with purpling, bracketing and occasional cateye is the norm at this time.* Salinas and Santa Maria areas are expected to continue to increase production over the next few weeks helping the overall volume in the supply chain.

CAULIFLOWER

Light to moderate supplies look to continue from California's various growing regions as mild weather continues. **Color is generally ivory with occasional yellow cast and soft shoulder showing up at pack-out. Quality is generally good on these limited supplies** as harvests look to gradually increase as Santa Maria and Salinas look to increase volume.

CARROTS

Supplies of California jumbo carrots are in good shape at this time. Quality is generally good with most other sizes and packs available.

STRAWBERRIES

Good supplies and quality available from Southern California Shippers as Santa Maria and Salinas begin light harvests. **Counts are in the teens with a little catface, crease, misshapen fruit and occasional weather damage reported at pack-out.** The weather has been ideal the past couple of weeks and this trend looks to continue. Volume from Central California expected around mid to late April

GRAPES

Chilean supplies of Ruby red seedless, Thompson and Sugarone green seedless grapes are available in good volumes on the East and West Coast at this time. **Chilean lunch bunch supplies are available in moderate volumes currently.** Quality and size are reported as generally very good on this offshore fruit.

STONE FRUIT

Off shore stone fruit supplies are on the downswing with light volumes of nectarines and plums still available. **Domestic Supplies are expected to begin in late April leaving a short gap in supplies until harvests begin. The fruit set is very good and growers expect good volumes and quality as harvests near.** Contact your sales representative for up to the minute information on availability and price.

MELONS

*Melon volumes, on the rise from offshore and Mexican suppliers, will peak in April. New volume from Mexico is finally arriving, a few weeks late, adding to the mix. This will keep supplies in good shape through April. **Offshore and Mexican melons will be comparable in quality and size structure. Melon sugar levels are on the rise with quality generally good.***

AVOCADOS

Hass avocado harvests have increased significantly providing a good supply of all sizes of #1 fruit, **#2 fruit available in decent supplies of 70s and smaller only.** *Remember this early fruit will require extra ripening time.*

CITRUS

*As navel harvests continue in districts I and II smaller fruit 88s and smaller will continue to be limited possibly all season long. Approximately 70% of this fruit is making the fancy grade. **Eating quality is excellent. As lemon harvests continue, fancy grade fruit will be increasingly difficult to find. This is due to damage from a cold snap in January and very windy conditions in February causing much of the fruit to be downgraded in to choice and standard grade fruit.** This will cause fancy grade fruit to become extremely tight later this summer.*

APPLES

All Washington apples are now available from CA storage supplies. Red delicious, Gold delicious and Granny Smith apples remain in good supply peaking on 100ct. This looks to continue with these storage supplies. Supplies of Jonagold, Gala, Fuji and Pink Lady varieties are becoming limited in volume size structure and grades available. Contact your sales representative for up to date information on price and availability.

POTATOES

Moderate demand continues as large sized potatoes 60s and larger remain limited at this time. Idaho and Washington have fair supplies and generally fairly good quality with some light peepers being reported at this time. Contact your sales representative for up to date information on price and availability.